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**FIRST REPORT**

OF THE

**Relief Land Settlement  
Committee**

OF

**ONTARIO**

**For the Years 1932 and 1933**



**TORONTO**

Printed and Published by Herbert H. Ball, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty

**1934**







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## Relief Land Settlement Committee

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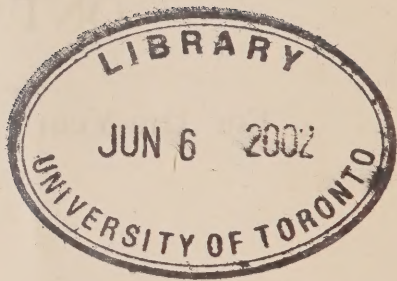
For the Years 1932 and 1933



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1934



## FOREWORD

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Relief Land Settlement is what its name implies—an unemployment relief measure for helping worthy people to help themselves by affording them an opportunity of self-support on the land.

I wish to bring to the attention of those who read this report that the merits or demerits of state aided land settlement were not in any way at issue. The plan was predicated on the simple basis that it would be to the advantage of qualified unemployed families themselves and in the interests of Ontario taxpayers who must shoulder the burden of relief costs, to capitalize expenditures that would ordinarily be made on direct relief and apply them towards enabling families to earn their own subsistence and preserve their self-reliance.

The Dominion and Provincial Governments and municipalities share equally in the settlement expenditures; thus the very nature of the tripartite arrangements demand sympathetic and effective co-operation. While the Province is charged with the responsibility of administering relief land settlement it is recognized that the degree of permanent settlement must depend in a large measure upon the care exercised by participating municipalities in recommending only such families as are fitted for pioneer life.

The progress of this plan to date, as reviewed in the accompanying report of the Committee and based on my personal contact with many settlers on their holdings—indicates that the assumption of the Dominion and Provincial authorities with respect to the value of relief settlement as one of the practical means of relieving stress of unemployment was well founded.

I am confident that with the kindly co-operative efforts of all bodies interested and a whole-hearted interest on the part of those dealing with accepted and prospective settlers such success will be attained as will fully justify the settlement plan.

WM. FINLAYSON.

## FOREWORD

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# First Report of the Relief Land Settlement Committee of Ontario

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## For the Years 1932 and 1933

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For years in Canada and perhaps more especially in the Province of Ontario the population has been moving steadily to urban centres. The census of 1931 shows fifty-four per cent. urbanized. When those living in villages are added to this, the percentage is sixty-nine, leaving only thirty-one per cent. actually on the land. This would indicate that the ratio of population between rural districts and urban centres has become disproportionate.

The history of colonization in Canada proves that any great movement of people to the land has taken place during or immediately following a serious depression.

In 1932 the Honourable Wesley A. Gordon, Minister of Labour in the Dominion Government, forwarded to the Provincial Legislature, for consideration, a proposal whereby the Dominion Government would contribute one-third of an amount (not to exceed \$600.00) for the purpose of providing a measure of self-sustaining relief to families who go to the land, the remaining two-thirds of the expenditure to be provided by the Province and the Municipality from which a family originated, the Dominion contribution to be a non-recoverable expenditure.

The sum of \$600.00 was considered to be the equivalent of two years' maintenance of a family in receipt of relief. The three-way contribution was designed to maintain an average family and provide a minimum of livestock and equipment under certain definite circumstances. The disbursement of this amount is made up approximately as follows:

Transportation . . . . .	\$ 80.00
Cabin . . . . .	100.00
Contribution to maintenance the first year . . . . .	120.00
Contribution to maintenance the second year . . . . .	100.00
Livestock and equipment . . . . .	200.00
	<hr/>
	\$600.00

### Cost of Relief Land Settlement vs. Direct Relief.

The Dominion Commissioner of Unemployment Relief, Ottawa, is authority for the statement that the cost of Relief Land Settlement for a period of two years is less than the cost of Direct Relief to maintain a family of five persons in an urban centre for a similar period.



### **Families, Residents of Canada.**

The agreement further specified that all families, who might be so assisted, must be residents of Canada and be selected from those who would otherwise be in receipt of Direct Relief, the selection of families to be made without discrimination by reason of political affiliation, race, or religious view.

### **Province Responsible for Administration.**

The Province was required to accept responsibility for administration of settlement including the location and inspection of farms, and also the selection of suitable families as to their physical fitness and qualifications in other respects.

The Provincial Government was to agree to assume the responsibility for the disbursement of funds to the families so assisted and no part of the cost of administration should be deducted from the maximum amount of \$600.00 set aside for subsistence and establishment of a family.

### **Acceptance of Agreement by Province.**

After careful consideration, the Provincial Government accepted the agreement and became a party to it, placing the responsibility for administration with the Honourable William Finlayson, Minister of the Department of Lands and Forests, who has kept closely in touch with Relief Land Settlement since it began. He has visited a great many of the settlers in their new homes, has given wholehearted and earnest attention to the settler's best interests, and personally supervised the adjustments of legitimate complaints insofar as is humanly possible.



START OF THE CLEARING



### **Setting up of Advisory Committee.**

A clause in the agreement required that an Advisory Committee be set up comprising a representative of the Dominion Land Settlement Branch, the Colonization Branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, and the Colonization Branch of the Canadian National Railways. This was done and the personnel of the Committee is as follows:

Honourable William Finlayson, Minister of Lands and Forests—*Chairman.*

J. D. Cameron, Esq., District Superintendent of Colonization, Canadian Pacific Railway Company, King and Yonge Streets, Toronto, Ontario.

R. M. Pym, Esq., District Superintendent, Department of Colonization and Agriculture, Canadian National Railways, 1 Toronto Street, Toronto.

C. M. Nixon, Esq., District Superintendent, Land Settlement Branch, Soldiers' Settlement of Canada, 32 Adelaide Street E., Toronto.

W. C. Kent, Esq., Superintendent of Land Settlement, Province of Ontario, Canadian Colonization Association, Canadian Pacific Railway, 214 Union Station, Toronto.

George Elliott, Esq., Director Colonization and Immigration Branch, Department of Agriculture, Parliament Buildings, Toronto.

Captain T. E. Heron, Director Central Bureau of Relief, City Hall, Toronto, Ontario.

William Magladery, Esq., Secretary, Relief Land Settlement Committee, Parliament Buildings, Toronto, Ontario.

The two additional members, Mr. G. A. Elliott and Captain T. E. Heron, were added at the request of the Honourable Wm. Finlayson so that their knowledge and experience, pertaining to colonization and relief, might be available to those officials directly in charge of administration. It might be well to state here that the members of this Committee have had long years of experience in colonization work and, with the exception of the Secretary, serve on the Committee without remuneration.

### **Duties of Committee.**

The Committee drafted proposed regulations and documents necessary to the administration of Relief Land Settlement under the terms of the agreement.

Certain members later took an active part in the selection of families, visited settlers in their new homes, and generally advised those in charge of administration.

### **Responsibility for Settlement of Families.**

The actual responsibility for settlement arrangements being Provincial, the selection of land and establishment of families was assigned to the Crown Lands Agents, of the Department of Lands and Forests, in certain sections of Northern Ontario, where raw lands were available.

A Supervisory Service was maintained to guide and advise the settlers in all of their undertakings. These Supervisors were men who knew pioneer conditions and the value of the services they have given to the settlers cannot be estimated



At Fort William and Port Arthur the work was undertaken by a resident Supervisor, who was responsible to the Department for selecting suitable farms, establishing and supervising the families participating.

### **Municipalities Circularized.**

Municipalities were circularized, advising them of the Plan. Those interested either sent their Officials to the Relief Land Settlement Office, at the Parliament Buildings, or were visited by various members of the Committee, who explained the Plan to them.

During 1932 Officials of several Municipalities made strong and insistent recommendations that certain definite families selected by them be accepted, with the result that a number proved to be entirely unsuited to pioneer life. Several of such families, failing to fit into their new surroundings or to have their unreasonable demands granted, returned to the Municipalities from which they came.

### **Plan Operating in 1932.**

The Plan was in active operation for approximately six weeks in 1932. No settlers were sent forward after the end of October. During this time 232 families were established.

### **Why Families Settled in New Ontario.**

Just here it might be well to explain why these families were settled in New Ontario rather than on vacant farms in the older parts of the Province. When it is remembered that the agreement is a relief measure, that the maximum amount set aside for each family is \$600.00, that no part of this sum may be used to rent or make payment on land, and that practically all farm lands in the old parts of the Province are privately owned and bearing a fairly high rate of taxation, the reason is obvious.

Crown lands in this Province are held by the Provincial Government and under the Public Lands Act may be sold to suitable applicants at fifty cents per acre, providing the homestead duties are carried out. By deferring the purchase price for two years, this enables settlers to retain the full \$600.00 for maintenance, live stock and equipment. Experience has shown that many owners of vacant farms in Older Ontario are unwilling to sell their properties without down payment.

The Department of Lands and Forests estimate that Northern Ontario is 300,000 square miles in extent and has a population, including towns and cities, of only some 300,000 people. Twelve thousand miles of road have been built and there are 4,000 miles of railroad. A great part of this area lies from 50 to 100 miles south of Winnipeg on a parallel line.

It has been proven beyond the experimental stage that the soil of the Northern part of the Province, especially the Upper and Lower Clay Belts, is in the main fertile and suitable for farming purposes.

The climate is no more rigorous than that of many other parts of the Dominion, where colonization has been successful. Precipitation is only slightly greater than in the older part of the Province. The hours of sunshine compare favourably with those of the area approximately 50 miles north of Toronto. The cold of winter is not particularly detrimental



because of the dryness of the atmosphere, this being very similar to the prairies. The many lakes and rivers afford drainage. The intensity of the summer sun promotes exceedingly rapid growth.

### **The Plan in Operation.**

Each prospective settler was required to file an application questionnaire, together with affidavit as to the bona fide of his answers regarding himself and his family with the Municipal Clerk. The Municipality then forwarded the application, together with their cheque for not less than \$100.00 per family, to the Secretary of the Committee. The application was reviewed and recommended for acceptance or rejection as the case seemed to warrant.

The head of an accepted family was notified when to proceed North; what equipment, clothing, etc., to take with him, and given settlers' rates over the railway. On arrival, he was met by one of the Department's Field Officials, shown several lots available for locating, and when satisfied was provided with building material to construct a dwelling for his family. Small tools, if not taken with him, were also purchased and charged against his \$600.00. Food was supplied to him.

Supervisory advice on how to build was given and, when the dwelling house was completed suitable for winter occupation, his family followed, the household furniture being shipped by freight and transported from the station to the new home. A cow, chickens, horse, ox or oxen, were purchased as soon as the settler's circumstances warranted this being done, providing there were sufficient funds in the settler's account. Stables had to be built, and feed made available.

It must be assumed that a Plan such as this, involving as it did the transplanting of unemployed families from towns and cities in the old parts of the Province to the undeveloped or only partially developed areas of Northern Ontario, where pioneer conditions obtain, required a certain amount of time and corrective changes in its administration before running smoothly. To elaborate on such grief as occurred in the earlier stages of settlement under the Plan will serve no good purpose. It should be sufficient to point out that such mistakes as were made were corrected as speedily as possible and did not re-occur in the establishment of families in the year 1933.

### **Selection of Lands.**

Lands to be used for settlement were selected over a large area in order that the families might be distributed along the existing railway lines and roads. In 1932, several locations, where communities were already established, were selected and approved by Municipal Officials or their representatives from Municipalities participating. These Officials were insistent that their families be established on the land chosen, with the result that progress by these settlers was not what it might have been under different circumstances. In 1933, lands were selected by officials of the Department of Lands and Forests, who are familiar with Northern conditions and few complaints have been received.

In 1933, thirty-two families were established on burned-over lands, adjacent to the main highway about eight miles south of Cochrane. The



land is easily cleared, the soil a rich clay loam, well watered, most of the lots having a small but sufficient area of green timber remaining, from which to secure building material. The same conditions apply in the main to all locations chosen for settlement that year.

**Reasons for Selection.**

Land burned or partially burned-over years ago is readily cleared. Stumps have rotted, moss has been burned off, and the fertility of the top soil restored by natural agencies. All of this permits of cropping long before green bush lots could be made ready for the growing of produce.

Locations on the highway or existing roads obviates the spending of funds to construct additional outlets for the settlers, lessens the hardships attending pioneer life, and provides ready access to and from markets when produce is for sale.

Many settlers expressed a desire to settle on green bush lots because of the revenue, which they believed could be had from the sale of timber. Those, whose wishes in this regard were granted, later discovered their mistake in not having selected partially burned-over lots much more easily cleared.

**WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED—1932-1933.**

**Municipalities Participating in the Plan in 1932.**

Fort William	London	Sandwich	Preston
Hamilton	Scarboro	St. Thomas	Bolton
Windsor	East Windsor	Stamford	Bowmanville
East York	Oshawa	Walkerville	Waterloo
North York	St. Catharines	Orillia	Chisholm
New Toronto	Chatham	Etobicoke	Ottawa
East Gwillimbury			Total—25

**Municipalities Participating in the Plan in 1933.**

Guelph	Teck Twp.	Waterloo	Woodstock
Port Arthur	Niagara-on-Lake	Eastview	Whitby
Dundas	Township of Tay	Brantford	Clemens
Stratford	Midland	Peterboro	Vaughan
Sarnia	Riverside	Simcoe	Wallaceburg
Ridgetown			Total—21

**Municipalities Participating in the Plan in 1932-33.**

Fort William	East Windsor	Sandwich	Walkerville
Windsor	Chatham	St. Thomas	Orillia
			Total—8

Total Number of Municipalities that have participated to date.....	46
Total Number of settlers located in 1932.....	232
Total Number of settlers located in 1933.....	151
	383

**Applicants Returned before Location:**

1932.....	22
1933.....	6
	28



Settlers Returned after Locating:

1932.....	26	
1933.....	nil	
	<hr/>	26
Total Number Returned.....		<hr/> 54
Total Number of Settlers Now on Land .....		<hr/> 329

Families Located in Each Section:

New Liskeard .....	46
Matheson . . . . .	63
Cochrane . . . . .	48
Kapuskasing . . . . .	52
Hearst . . . . .	8
Fort William and Port Arthur .....	99
Monetville . . . . .	8
Miscellaneous . . . . .	5
	<hr/>
Total.....	329
Present Population of 1932 settlement.....	1,062 souls
Present Population of 1933 settlement.....	701 "
	<hr/>
Total.....	1,763 "

Three hundred and twenty-nine families (329), making a total of 1,763 souls, were taken from urban centres, where they were unemployed and placed on the land. They were housed and fed and, in many instances, provided with clothes. In their new homes they found constant employment. While not immediately revenue producing, their work at land clearing, building, and general improvement of their lots, laid a foundation for future security.

There has been a constant watchfulness on the part of those in charge of administration to see that supervision does not develop into a form of paternalism and defeat the aim of the Plan to give deserving families an opportunity through their own resourcefulness and labour to become self-supporting.



SETTLER'S FIRST HOME



It might be stressed again that the agreement between the Dominion and Provincial Governments is a relief measure and not a general colonization policy. It is considered good business in the interests of families, without personal assets but having farm experience and resident in towns and cities, to give them an opportunity to gain a measure of independence through their own efforts on the land. It is of vital interest to the taxpayer because the cost is no greater than is required to maintain the same families in comparative idleness on direct relief in towns and cities.

Relief Land Settlement has not been put forward as a complete solution of the unemployment problem. It was decided, however, and with a good deal of justification, that the Plan offers one of the practical means of meeting, at least in part, the general problem of unemployment with which the Province is confronted.

No attempt has been made to induce families to apply for settlement under the Plan. The urge has come from within themselves and several thousand made application. It may be mentioned that this Province is not alone in this Plan. Eight of the nine Provinces have entered into agreements with the Dominion Government indicating that the practical features of the Plan have been generally recognized.

In an undertaking of this kind the Government and those in charge of settlement have but one purpose in mind—that is the interest of the individual family and the ultimate success of the Plan. Reviewing the work of last year, it will be observed that the majority of settlers give promise of establishing permanent homes. Obviously the Plan would defeat itself were it regarded as a convenient vehicle to transfer urban problem cases to rural Municipalities. One or two Municipalities may have failed to appreciate this basic principle when recommending several of their families for acceptance.

In 1933 the majority of families, after their applications had been received from the Municipalities, were interviewed by members of the Advisory Committee or a Supervisor. This gave opportunity to reject those families not considered suitable to pioneering. It also reduced greatly the number of complaints received after the families had gone North, compared with the number of settlers who had complained in 1932. None of those established in 1933 have left their farms.

Of the families established in 1932 twenty-six have abandoned their homesteads. This condition is due primarily to their unfitness to withstand the hardships incidental to pioneer life. The majority of the families remaining state that the settlement Plan has given them what it purported to give, that is—an opportunity to establish themselves and eventually become self-supporting. These remaining families, despite their difficulties, express the belief that they will eventually succeed in making homes for themselves.

A number of families, having gone back to the Municipalities from which they left to go North, were soon clamouring to be returned to their homesteads.

Spring settlement has shown a decided advantage over other seasons of the year. It enables the family to have a garden and sow or plant any other crops for which they have land ready. It gives better opportunity

for the completion of out-buildings before winter sets in. The family have time to look around them and become accustomed to their location and community during the summer months. There is greater activity in varied lines of work in the older settled area and the settler may be able to barter his labour for farm produce or other commodities. There is pasturage for a cow, and other farm animals may be more easily maintained than during the winter.

### Market Possibilities.

The markets of the North offer tremendous possibilities for the disposing of a variety of home-grown products. In a recent report on marketing in Northern Ontario it has been pointed out that, during a twelve-month period, car load lots of the following were imported:

	Beef	Pork	Lamb & Veal	Butter	Eggs
Cochrane . . . . .	132.	116.	24.	44.	36.
Timmins . . . . .	90.7	79.7	16.5	34.3	33.7
Kirkland Lake and Rouyn . . . . .	44.9	39.4	8.2	15.9	12.2
North Bay . . . . .	27.	23.8	4.9	11.	10.4
Sudbury . . . . .	100.6	88.5	18.3	38.5	32.5
Total . . . . .	395.2	347.4	71.9	143.7	124.8

	Poultry	Potatoes	Mixed Vegetables	Canned Milk
Cochrane . . . . .	12.	35.	25.	
Timmins . . . . .	9.2	40.	105.	39.
Kirkland Lake and Rouyn . . . . .	4.2	19.	33.	26.
North Bay . . . . .	2.5	43.	83.	6.
Sudbury . . . . .	9.1	85.	12.	
Total . . . . .	37.	222.	258.	71.

Additional produce was also imported in car lots to other Railway points in these districts, the greater part of which might in time be grown locally.

It is recognized that the production and sale of these commodities within the North would shut out outside producers and mean less revenue to the railroads. On the other hand, the number of families required to produce that portion of the total import, which came from the other Provinces, would mean a tremendous saving in relief to this Province because such families would be self-supporting.

### Growing Their Own Vegetables.

Practically all settlers established under this Plan in 1932 and 1933 had their own gardens, milk, and eggs this year and were able to raise at least one pair of pigs. Horses or oxen, when purchased, were used in land clearing and in hauling logs for building purposes. Labour was bartered with settlers long established for additional milch cows and produce of various kinds. In several instances the ploughing of land cleared was paid for in a similar way.

### Roads.

A few settlers were established on roads only partially completed. These roads have been finished and the result is the opening of many more desirable lots within easy reach of the Railway. There are now on relief land settlers without ready access to and from their farms.



### **Game and Wild Fruits.**

From personal visits to settlers, it was learned that fish, game, and wild fruits in season appreciably supplemented the contribution allowed for food.

### **Attitude of Settlers Toward Plan.**

With the exception of the disgruntled few who have returned to their original Municipalities, the settlers in general are fairly well satisfied. They realize that the task before them of making a home under pioneer conditions is not an easy one. Forgetting for a moment those, who have abandoned their homesteads, it is gratifying to observe the steadfast determination of those remaining to make progress and meet cheerfully whatsoever difficulties with which they may have to contend.



FALL WHEAT READY FOR THRESHING, SEPTEMBER 10TH,  
NEWER ONTARIO

### **Practical Observations by Rev. J. C. Cochrane, Supt. of Missions for the United Church of Canada.**

The Committee consider it interesting and worthy of comment to record herewith the free, frank, impartial opinion and observations of the Rev. Mr. Cochrane.

In his wide ministrations, with a sturdy pioneer background and an experience that qualifies him to speak with a decided impressiveness, Mr. Cochrane personally made a survey of a large number of the Relief Land Settlers during the past summer and his views and studied conclusions are embodied in the following report:

North Bay, November 22, 1933.

### **Back-to-the-Land.**

The last two years have witnessed quite an extensive internal migration within the Province of Ontario, which is the direct result of economic conditions affecting not only this Province but every Province in the Dominion,—indeed they are common to the whole world.

In times of prosperity the drift of population is toward industrial centres with their strong attractions of cash incomes, stated hours of labour, modern conveniences, and the educational and social advantages of the more populous communities. Under normal conditions, the urban centres have been the successful competitors of the rural districts in their attractiveness for the population.

Periods of depression bring a change of outlook. The advantages of living upon the land begin to make themselves apparent. Where unemployment is so widespread and long continued as in the case of the depression now upon us, it is to be expected that there should be a "Back-to-the-Land" Movement. While the farmer has suffered severely, unless it be in areas where taxation has become exorbitant, he is at least assured of a shelter for his family and a table furnished with food of his own providing, while his urban-minded fellow-citizen may find himself without income, home, or the necessities of life, when depression slows down the tempo of modern industry and business. It is natural, therefore, that in an extended period of depression numbers of people should be attracted by the measure of security and independence which life on the land affords.

### **Assisted Land Settlement.**

Many countries are taking advantage of this attitude of mind and are attempting to correct the disproportion of urban and rural population by assisted land settlement. That this is a costly undertaking is beyond dispute but apparently no country has discovered any other method of meeting a condition, where urban populations have outgrown proportions, which permit successful economic functioning. These schemes may differ in detail in various countries, or in different Provinces within the same country, but the principle underlying all is the same,—financial assistance to the citizen who desires to establish himself on the land.



SECOND CROP OF ALFALFA, READY TO CUT SEPTEMBER 10TH,  
NEWER ONTARIO



In Ontario the scheme is known as the Relief Land Settlement Plan. Its purpose is to provide the citizen with both financial assistance and supervision as he makes the transition from industry to agriculture. A fund of \$600.00 is provided to assist the settler in getting a start on a homestead in the Clay Belt of Northern Ontario. This sum is made up by contributions of \$200.00 each from the Federal and Provincial Governments, and the Municipality from which the settler migrates. This amount is not a loan charged against the settler's homestead, as has been sometimes understood, but a grant of money under the control of supervisors to assist families in financing the initial cost of establishing themselves on a homestead.

It is perhaps to be expected that any such plan should come under a barrage of criticism. This may be expected from various sources: from political opposition, since it is fostered by the Government; from individuals who are not satisfied with the experiment and who use the public press to make known their dissatisfaction; from those who believe that its administration has been faulty and unwise; and from officials of Municipalities participating, who feel that their citizens have not had a fair deal.

During the past months, criticisms of the Relief Land Settlement Plan have been given a great deal of publicity and have stirred up considerable uneasiness in the mind of the public. It seemed wise that some impartial investigation should be made of the situation.

### **Qualifications for Investigation.**

Certain qualifications are necessary for such an investigation. The person making it must have some knowledge of pioneer life. There are certain inconveniences, even hardships and privations, which are incidental to pioneering and can not be avoided. It is useless to send a person reared in a city environment to report on the conditions of settlers. They cannot distinguish between hardships, which are incidental to pioneering and those which should be relieved. Since this scheme is fostered and carried on under the Provincial Government, anyone reporting on conditions must be free from political bias if the report is to be fair to all concerned. No report can truthfully portray conditions if it is coloured by political prejudices.

In addition to the qualifications of the pioneering background of experience and a freedom from political prejudice, if one is to deal adequately with the situation, he must be guided by intelligence rather than swayed by sentiment. One of the dangers of the present situation is that sentiment is so easily aroused that it may easily supplant intelligence in dealing with human interests. The inevitable result of a philanthropy based on sentimentality rather than intelligence is to injure rather than help people.

Because of the fact that the area in which these settlers are located lies within the boundaries of the territory which I supervise as Superintendent of Missions for the United Church of Canada, and that I am naturally interested in the colonization of the country, I thought I should undertake an inspection of the conditions of the newcomers to this section of the Province as a representative of the United Church. I do not lay claim to all the necessary qualifications for this self-imposed task, but I was born on a northern homestead and raised in the backwoods. After

thirty years of married life my wife is still wondering whether I am a Grit or a Tory, which is a pretty good indication that I am neither. I have had some experience in administrative responsibility. I have no interests to serve but those of humanity, justice and fairplay. If any report I make leads to a better understanding of the situation, or the relief of any of its irritations, I shall feel gratified.

### **Complexities of Land Settlement and Relief.**

First of all, may I say that the present situation with respect to the settlement of people on the homesteads of Northern Ontario presents many complexities which can not be understood apart from a study of the situation. Much of the dissatisfaction and unrest arises out of misunderstanding. Before any intelligent criticism can be offered on the situation one must know where to allocate responsibility.

It ought to be understood by those who are not in touch with the situation that all the settlers who have come to Northern homesteads recently have not come under the Relief Land Settlement Plan. Many have come on their own responsibility and without planned assistance. If such a settler takes up a homestead in an unorganized Township he may apply and secure Direct Relief if his circumstances warrant it. The settler receiving Direct Relief is not limited to any flat rate monthly. The amount he receives is determined by his needs.

If such a settler should take a homestead in an organized Township he cannot secure relief of any kind unless the Township provides 20 per cent. of the amount given. Few, if any, townships in the North are able to do this, consequently the settler in an organized township may experience hardship and difficulty but it is rather suggestive of what can be done without assistance, when one finds some of these settlers getting along very well.

Under the Relief Land Settlement Plan a settler may be settled in either an organized or an unorganized township, but it makes no difference to the assistance he received. Out of the \$600.00 grant which stands to his credit he is able to buy material for the necessary buildings on his homestead and also a cow or horse, some chickens, etc. He is allowed a flat rate of \$10.00 per month for groceries. The \$600.00 grant is to be spread over the first two years of his occupancy of his homestead, but he may draw up to \$500.00 the first year.

### **Variations in Homesteads.**

One of the factors in land settlement, which no supervision can control, is the inevitable variation in the homestead upon which settlers are placed. Some homesteads may have a considerable amount of timber. Where a homestead of this type is located within reasonable distance of a mining centre, there is a market for lagging for timbering shafts and also a market for wood. Some homesteads may have a small stand of pulpwood for which a market may be found. In such cases the settler is able to realize a cash income from his homestead almost immediately.

On the other hand, there are homesteads where the timber has been cut out and nothing marketable remains. There are quite a number of settlers on homesteads where the timber was burnt in the Haileybury fire



of eleven years ago—a fire which left hundreds of acres in the southern part of the Clay Belt almost as bare as the prairie. Homesteads of this type have the advantage of being easily cleared. On some homesteads very little labour is required to prepare quite an acreage for crop. It will be readily seen that in the latter case the settler must depend on the annual returns from tilling the soil for his living and that his returns will come more slowly than in the case where there is a crop of timber ready for market.

### **Personal Equation in the Land Settlement.**

Another very uncertain factor, which enters into the scheme of assisting people to establish themselves on the land, is the difference in human nature. One settler will manage to get along where another will starve. It is to be expected that, out of those who have been brought North under Relief Land Settlement, a number have no fitness of spirit for pioneering and little taste for agricultural pursuits. They have availed themselves of the Relief Land Settlement offer only as a measure of relief, and will never make good on their homesteads. A few are born agitators and not only fail to make any effort to establish themselves, but seek to disaffect those who otherwise would be satisfied.

### **Criticisms of the Relief Land Settlement Scheme.**

Let me now take up a few of the general criticisms which have been directed against the Relief Land Settlement Plan:

1. The time of year in which some settlers were brought to their homesteads:

Last year (1932) some settlers were brought up north in the late fall or early winter. I understand that those responsible for the administration of this scheme now agree that this was a mistake. It is not wise to introduce settlers to their homestead experience at the beginning of the Northern winter, when little can be done on the average homestead. Settlers arriving in the fall have not adequate time to prepare for the winter, and no opportunity to supplement their food supply by growing vegetables. The ideal time would seem to be early in the spring—say about April—which would give the settler time to erect his house before getting busy on the land.

2. Failure to select the proper type of settler:

In the early stages of Relief Land Settlement there was not a careful enough selection of the people brought to Northern Ontario homesteads. It is inevitable that there will be mistakes made even when the greatest care is exercised. No one can absolutely predict success or failure for a man until he has been tested under the conditions of homesteading. However, generally speaking, it is a mistake to bring elderly people, or people with very large families of children needing school privileges, as most of the homesteads are quite a distance from the school. Also, when a settler is found to be a misfit, there ought to be provision for returning him to the Municipality from which he came. I found two men, who were not only doing nothing on their homesteads, but doing their best to make their neighbours dissatisfied also. When I mentioned this to the Supervisor, he agreed, but said that there was no way of returning them to their Municipality. The right of deportation ought to be embodied in this scheme in

order to weed out the idle and the mischief-makers. There was every evidence that increasing care was being exercised in the selection of the settlers, and this is a very necessary precaution.

### 3. The flat rate of \$10.00 monthly for groceries, etc.

This has been the chief cause of dissatisfaction on the part of some settlers, and it is responsible for a great deal of the unfavourable publicity which the scheme has received.

My opinion is that it is not a sound principle on which to administer maintenance to families. I found one family of three who said they were "just getting by" on the \$10.00 monthly. I visited another family of eleven and it can easily be imagined that they were having a difficult time and had the appearance of being under-nourished. Here again the differing capacity for management and economy manifests itself. One of the reasons for the failure of some families to make their allowance go further was because they had not been accustomed to economical buying. \$10.00 per month does not allow for the purchase of much canned stuff, and many of the families from urban localities had grown accustomed to that sort of buying. I found one family of nine who said they were managing very well on that amount, but on enquiry I found that they had lived on the frontiers for a number of years and mastered the art of buying the least expensive and most nourishing foods.

But no matter how economical the settler may be, eleven mouths cannot be filled on the same amount as three. The Mother's Allowance Act, which has to do with the support of families, has followed the unit principle, which seems to be the only sound principle when it comes to the maintenance of families. I realize that there is a desire to make the \$600.00 cover the two years in every case, but, if the flat rate is to be adhered to, then there ought to be a regulation which would permit only families of a certain size, say not more than five, to be brought to a homestead. An alternative would be to allow more than \$600.00 for a family, over a certain number. It costs Municipalities more to give direct relief to a large family and there seems to be no valid argument against the fact that it is worth more to both Municipalities and Governments to help a large family to the status of self-support than a small family. If large families are to be encouraged to settle under this Plan, it has a serious weakness in not providing a greater sum than \$600.00 for the establishment of the larger family. It seems to me that a flat rate for a family of three, and then one dollar per month for each additional child under the age of sixteen, would eliminate much of the irritation which has been created by an attempt to administer the Plan on a flat monthly rate. The Government has provided some measure of relief in providing road work by which the settler may augment the amount available for the purchase of the necessities of life.

### 4. Unsuitability of location:

After visiting 125 families out of a list of 221, who have been located on homesteads under the Relief Land Settlement Plan, I consider that not more than 10 were unsuitable for farming and even those were not impossible for agriculture but, because of their need for drainage or their broken nature through rock outcroppings, I considered that more suitable locations could have been secured in a country where good land is so plentiful.



There is also a doubt in my mind of the advisability of locating settlers on solid bush homesteads. The labour and time involved in making a farm out of such a homestead is very great, and the settler is apt to become discouraged. There is a saying among the old settlers in the North that a homestead is usually settled three times before it is permanently occupied. The ideal location is a homestead with a burned-over area and also a bit of green timber. I found the settlers on homesteads, which were burnt over and easily cleared, much more contented and happy than those on bush homesteads. Since the purpose of the Plan is to develop agriculturists who will be content to live off the returns from tilling the soil, that should be kept in mind in locating homesteads.

Some blame should be attached to officials of Municipalities who came north to choose a location for their citizens and urged that they be settled in a certain section, which, in the case of one community at least, has meant homesteads of solid bush, difficult to clear and necessitating the construction of five miles of road before they can readily have access to the highway. Since this community is not situated adjacent to any town which would provide a market, it is difficult to understand why the official chose this particular location. Lately, men of experience have been employed to locate homesteads suitable for agriculture. This is a very essential step in the success of the Plan.

I am strongly of the opinion that those responsible for the administration would have been wise to have confined their settlements to that section of Northern Ontario between New Liskeard and Cochrane. The more compact territory would have insured more efficient supervision and lessened the cost of administration. The greatest percentage of discontented settlers was found west of Cochrane. In my opinion it is unwise to establish a small Protestant community in the midst of a French-Canadian Roman Catholic Settlement. The community at Fauquier is an example of this. The Relief Land Settlers complain that they get no co-operation from the older residents, in the way of exchanging labour for ploughing their land. One of two things should be done with communities of this type—either they should be enlarged sufficiently to maintain a good public school and their own religious institutions, or they should be withdrawn and relocated.

It is significant of the greater care now being exercised in the choice of homesteads, when I say that in the last settlements established I found practically every settler satisfied. The best settlements I visited were those in Teefy and Hanna Townships. Naturally there will always be the occasional settler who will complain no matter how advantageously he is located.

##### 5. Disparity between Relief Land Settlement and Direct Relief.

I found some unrest among those who have been settled through the agency and under the regulations of Relief Land Settlement, because they thought the settler on Direct Relief received a larger allowance monthly than those under this scheme. They contended that, while they were held down to a flat rate of \$10.00 per month, those on Direct Relief might possibly obtain double that amount if they needed the larger sum. While I intimated that in my opinion the flat rate is not a feasible scheme in family maintenance, the settler under Relief Land Settlement regulations who advances this argument has lost sight of the fact that his financial assistance really amounts to \$25.00 per month. He has not taken into account

that his neighbour on Direct Relief has had no assistance in securing material for his buildings or stock for his homestead. The difference, therefore, in the monthly allowance for groceries, clothing, etc., does not constitute a fair comparison as to the amount of assistance received. However, all systems of relief ought to be co-ordinated in order to avoid the possibility of securing a greater measure of assistance under one system than another, since, whatever may be the system, those in need have the right to expect uniform assistance from public funds.

#### 6. Complaints re details of Administration:

Various complaints were heard concerning details of administration. Many of these were of a rather petty nature and betrayed an attitude well-known to those who have found that the more assistance some people are given the more they expect. However, some are serious enough to be brought to the attention of those responsible for the administration of the Relief Land Settlement Plan.

(a) The delivery of monthly grocery orders in bad condition and shortweighting the settlers. Overcharge for building material, etc., one woman showed me a mixture of tea, rice and soap-flakes, as a result of her grocery order being carelessly parcelled and left in the rain. With a \$10.00 monthly allowance for groceries, such a loss is a serious matter to the settlers. There were also statements from settlers of overcharge by firms supplying building materials, and shortweighting in settler's groceries. Firms guilty of such actions should be punished. It is a sad commentary on the inhumanity of man that there are people who will seek to profit out of the misfortune of their fellowmen, especially if they know a project is under Government supervision. Those responsible for administration of the settler's fund of \$600.00 declare that the settler is free to select the store from which his groceries are purchased. This was not the understanding of many of the settlers I visited, and the arrangement should be made clear since the settler does not handle his funds.

(b) Failure to keep promises made to settlers regarding ploughing of land, etc.,—perhaps one of the weaknesses of the Relief Land Settlement Plan is its very paternal nature. Paternalism usually fails to develop self-reliance and personal initiative. However, if a scheme is designed to supervise the expenditures and operations of the settler, it must accept the responsibility of its constitution. A number of those under the Relief Land Settlement Plan complained that they could not get the older settlers with their teams to do their ploughing because payment was so slow in coming through. One settler told of hens ordered in May and the requisition going through the office in June, but the farmer from whom they were purchased did not receive his money until the month of October. Surely this is an unnecessary delay. If the scheme aims at a paternal oversight of the disbursement of the \$600.00 fund, it must accept the responsibility of such disbursements. There was also much dissatisfaction over promises made by the administration to see that the settlers' land was fall-ploughed if the settlers would get an acreage ready for ploughing, which was not fulfilled. This, too, is a rather serious matter for the settler, as fall-ploughing is vital to a good crop in the North Country.

#### Summary of Causes for Criticism.

In the earlier stages of its operations, the scheme manifested evidence of immaturity. It had evidently been launched before the details were thought out. There is the consideration also that in projects of this kind,



only experience can teach some things. Many of the causes for criticism have been removed as experience has led to a correction of earlier mistakes. There has been a great improvement in its operations since it was launched and I feel reasonably sure that it will become increasingly effective in its results. As I have indicated, there is still room for improvement in some of the details of its administration. I have found all its officials ready to give careful and courteous attention to any suggestion.



OAT CROP—NEWER ONTARIO

### **Benefits of the Relief Land Settlement Plan.**

1. It is a measure of economy for the public purse.

Practically all of these settlers were out of employment and they and their families had to be supported out of public funds. Rent and fuel are always big items of expense in urban centers. By placing these families on homesteads the expense of rent and fuel is eliminated and opportunity given for the family at once to do something toward its own support. One settler told me he was receiving an allowance of six dollars a week from public funds for groceries and fuel before coming to his homestead.

2. The settler has something to occupy his time and give him an interest in life. Many of the settlers spoke of the improved health of themselves and their families. One settler said: "Never will I consent to go back to hanging around street corners in idleness every day. Here I have an interest in life and something to keep me busy every day." Quite a percentage of those who have been settled under this Plan were enthusiastic over the prospects and declared they could not be driven away from their new homes. A number were emphatic that they had been treated well and that they were thankful for the opportunity afforded and the prospect of independence. There are few things more demoralizing than to live in idleness and depend on public charity for a living. The scheme offers a way out to those so situated.

3. From figures, which will be given later, it will be seen that approximately sixty-five per cent. of those visited declared they were satisfied and determined to remain on their homesteads. It is not to be supposed

that the amount expended on the other thirty-five per cent. will be a total loss. The homesteads they have occupied will be improved by the expenditure of the greater part of the \$600.00 if the settlers have worked at all while on their homesteads. Certainly the Province of Ontario, as such, does not stand to lose anything under this Plan.

4. This Plan, if successful, will help to correct the unbalanced proportions of urban and rural population and to this extent will be economically and socially beneficial.

**A Synopsis of the Information Secured.**

Mr. William Magladery, Secretary of the Relief Land Settlement Committee, furnished a list of 221 families settled on Northern Ontario homesteads under this Plan. Of this number, 125 were visited. Practically every community, where these people have been located, was visited in order that the survey might be as complete as was possible to make it in a limited time. Communities in the following townships were visited:—Savard, Henwood, Brethour, Dack, Marquis, Teefy, Stock, Currie, Bowman, Machin, O'Brien, Iddington, McCrea, Casgrain and Hanna.

In each case the information was obtained by a personal interview with the settler and his family. There was no attempt to influence the expression of opinion and the utmost frankness was encouraged. The following questionnaire was used to obtain the information desired:—

Name,	Unaided,
Address,	Direct Relief,
Race,	Relief Land Settlement,
Number in Family,	What Progress,
Former Residence,	What Stock,
Residence on Homestead,	Have you Vegetables for Winter?
Farming Experience,	Complaints,
Distance from School,	Suggestions,
Distance from Church,	Remarks.
Church Preference,	

The following is a synopsis of the information secured:—

Number of families satisfied with prospects and determined to stay by the land .....	81
Number of families who are experiencing difficulty in getting along and are doubtful of the outcome .....	16
Number of families who were non-committal about their intentions to remain on the land if times should improve .....	7
Number of families who were dissatisfied and determined to leave because they saw no future on the land .....	21
	<hr/> 125
Average length of residence on homestead of those visited	9½ months
Number with homes erected of a fairly comfortable type..	125
Number with either stables or barns, as well as a home...	85
Average amount of land cleared by settler in 9½ months..	4½ acres
Those able to raise vegetables sufficient for winter supply..	85
(An additional number had raised a partial supply.)	
Average size of family of the homes visited .....	5



## Some Observations.

To those, who are acquainted with the problems of helping people, it is well known that the more you do for people of a certain type the more difficult it is to please them. There is this danger about assisted land settlement. Our sturdy pioneer forefathers received no Government assistance and did little complaining. I have no hesitation in saying that the hardships of present day pioneering are not to be compared with those of fifty years ago. It will be a mistake to encourage these people to think that the Government should do everything for them. Character and independence are not developed by that method. The settler must be encouraged to attain the status of independence as soon as possible, if this scheme is to be successful.

It would be difficult to over-emphasize the dangers of uncontrolled sentimentality in connection with this situation. Some of the less scrupulous of these settlers are becoming wise to the personal benefits of publicity. Letters appear from them in the public press and, as a result, some good-hearted people send them assistance of various kinds. Usually it is the people who are making no effort to take advantage of their opportunity who are making the most complaints and, if the newspapers are really concerned about the public good, rather than sensational news-mongering, they will investigate the authenticity of some of the complaints before publishing them. Much harm has been done the North Country by the publication of complaints from people, who will never make good in any country or in any situation and whose opinions of the country are not worth the paper on which they are written, but are taken at face value by an unsuspecting public.

In one home I visited the settler and his wife were bitter in their complaints of the way they had been treated and the prospects of the country. Recently a complaint, that they were in a state of semi-starvation, found its way into the public press. However, the public ought to also have known that this man refused to work on the roads to augment the amount available for the purchase of groceries and clothing. When I asked him about cutting the pulpwood on his homestead, he made the excuse that he got his feet wet at that job. He had been busy before my arrival in building snow-slides in front of his house for his children's play. Certainly there are no prospects in the North Country for the man who is not willing to work hard to make a home for himself and his family.

Officials from Municipalities who visit their former citizens should be careful of their statements to the settlers. I found one community bristling with antagonism against the Relief Land Settlement Administration because a visiting official stated that a certain sum of money, provided them as they left the Municipality, was a gift. The Relief Land Settlement officials had charged this amount against their \$600.00 fund. I took this grievance up with the Supervisors and have since received a copy of the Auditor's statement showing that this Municipality had requested the Government to credit this amount on the \$200.00 they provided in each case. There had been a change in the officials of the Municipality and the visiting official did not know the facts but his unfounded statement caused much discontent and unrest.

While churches of all denominations are wrestling with the problem of decreased incomes for missionary work, I feel that there has been a

heroic effort on the part of many ministers in the North Country to keep in touch with these new settlers. I was pleased to find that most ministers were able to act as guides in locating these communities and had personally visited these people in their homes. Occasional religious services have been held in a central home in some of these communities or in school houses, where they are available. Some of the ministers have travelled fifty miles to hold these occasional services and all are men whose charges already cover large areas. It would be idle to pretend that the situation is being adequately dealt with from the viewpoint of the religious interests of these people. Sunday schools and worship services are urgently needed and there is a great challenge to the church in this opportunity. If the church does not minister to these people in their need, it is folly to expect to secure their allegiance when the hardships of the early pioneering experiences are largely past. It is in this period of re-adjustment that these people need the ministrations of the church and the fortifying power of religious faith.

### Conclusion.

I think the Relief Land Settlement Plan is worth while. I have already indicated that mistakes of its early administration are being corrected. While it is impossible to predict with any assurance the measure of its success, because of the uncertainty of conditions controlling the returns from agriculture, I think the whole enterprise has already been justified from the expressions of satisfaction of the great majority of those I visited. I wish to say that I was welcomed in every home and given ready co-operation in securing information from the settler. I also wish to express my appreciation to all those officials connected with the Administration of the Relief Land Settlement Plan for their courtesy and co-operation in supplying information, without which the task would have been much more difficult.

Signed: J. C. COCHRANE.



A SUCCESSFUL FARM IN NORTHERN ONTARIO



## Contributions to the Comfort of Settlers and Their Families.

Last year Mr. Alfred Fitzpatrick, Principal of the Frontier College, visited 24 families settled under the Plan in Northern Ontario and was so impressed with their progress that he told the story of their establishment to the congregation of a small church near Woodbridge. The members of this church loaded a car with vegetables and other commodities, free of charge, and shipped it North where its contents were divided among the settlers.

Having a kindly thought for the comfort of the families, the Secretary contacted with various organizations throughout the Province and arranged that every settler and his family be remembered at Christmas time by the church with which they were affiliated before going North. Parcels, consisting of warm clothing, bedding and other useful articles, were sent.

The Imperial Tobacco Company gave each settler four packages of tobacco at Christmas. Several tons of leaf tobacco was given free by growers in Norfolk County, to be distributed among the settlers as required. The Red Cross Society provided layettes for a number of expectant mothers. Hospitalization and medical care was also provided when necessary.

Seven loaning libraries, comprised of approximately 25,000 books, were secured without cost in Toronto, Windsor and London. These libraries are complete and are properly balanced, having the correct proportion of fiction, history, travel, biography, religion, science, mechanics, and also books for children. These libraries have been placed in school houses or where schools are not yet established, in settlers' homes, and are available to all settlers in the immediate areas. Arrangements have been made to loan these books under the same rules and regulations as are followed by the loaning libraries in the cities.

A Women's Institute Branch has been organized where the communities are large enough and the new branch contacted with an old established branch in the lower part of the Province.

This year, every man, woman and child comprising Relief Land Settlement families, received Christmas gifts from the churches and also from the Municipalities in which they resided previously. Tobacco will again be supplied the men by the Imperial Tobacco Company and a supply of leaf tobacco is being arranged for from Norfolk growers.

The Canadian Cannery very generously contributed, free of all cost, one case of tinned vegetables for each family.

On behalf of these pioneer families, the Hon. William Finlayson and the Committee wish to express their appreciation of the generosity and co-operation so freely given by the various companies, municipalities and organizations, whose gifts added so much to the enjoyment and comfort of these families at the Christmas season.

### **Plans for 1934.**

Plans are under way to carry on settlement of families in 1934. Special care will be taken to select only those families adapted to pioneer life, who are sincere in their desire to return to the land and who are physically fit to work.

Suitable lots have been carefully selected; supervision will be maintained; and the whole aim of those responsible for administration will continue to be the furtherance of the best interests of the settlers and the success of the Plan.

Dated at Toronto, Parliament Buildings, Dec. 31, 1933.





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